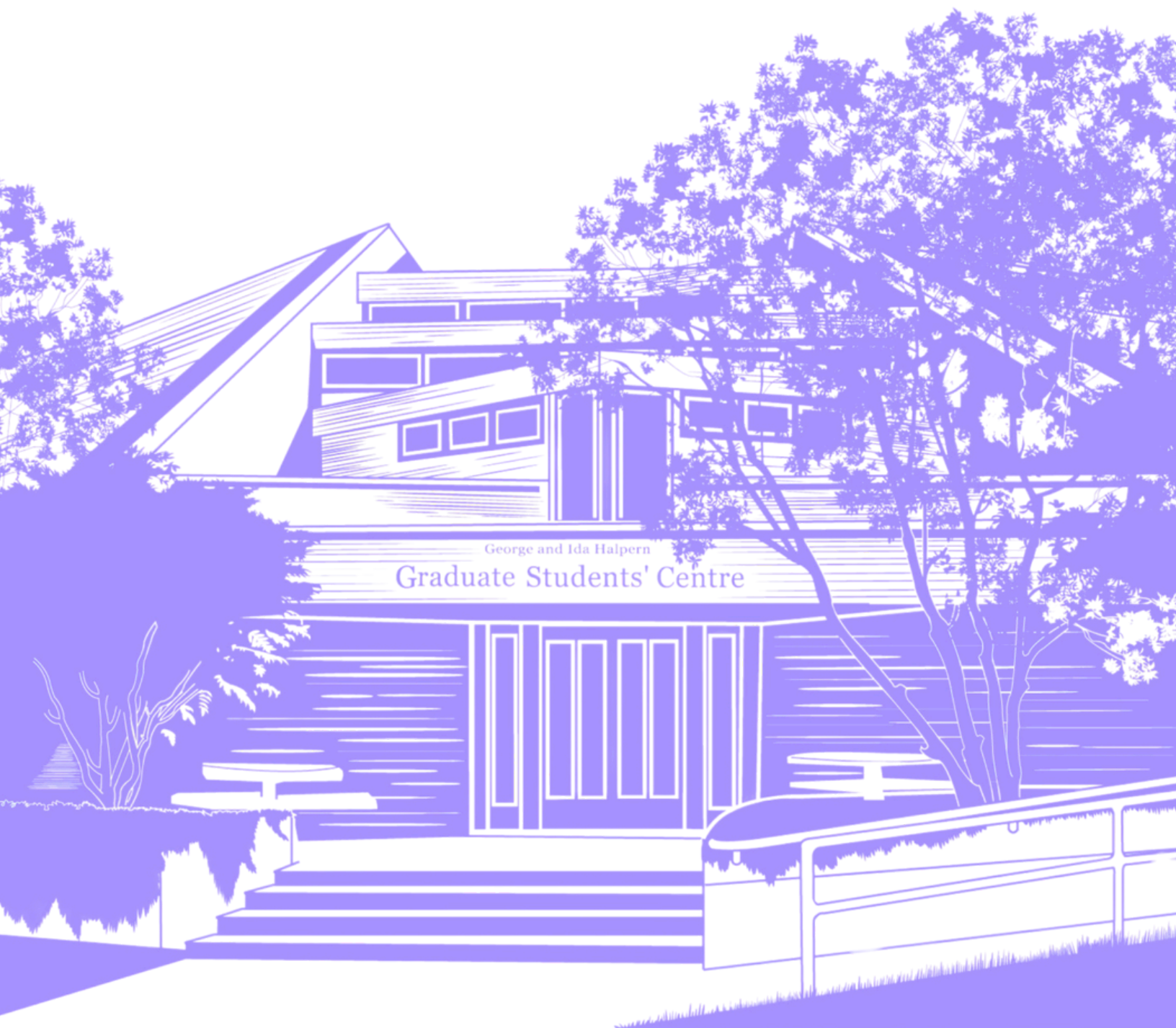


University of Victoria **Graduate Students' Society**



ANNUAL PLAN 2025/26



LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIP

Your 2025-26 Executive Board put together this Annual Plan to guide the work that we are undertaking over the course of our terms. We had many discussions over how to focus our energies to address graduate student concerns, uplift our members, and continue fostering the strong community that the GSS has built over the years.

This document outlines the scope of our work throughout our term, while allowing some flexibility to address issues that may come up during the year. We've grouped our goals under three main areas: ***Connection & Recognition, Access & Support, and Engagement & Empowerment***. In each of these areas, we identify our overarching goals and describe specific projects or targets we will work towards to accomplish those goals.

We hope that our Annual Plan conveys to you, the graduate students we serve, the ways in which we're working to better the experiences of graduate students here at Uvic.

With warmth,
Your 2025-26 Executive Board
Maggie Lawton, Asma Noureen, Jitendra Palaparty, Sarah Roberts,
and Rosemary Webb

George and Ida Halpern
Graduate Students' Centre

2025-26 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Rosemary Webb
Chair

Asma Noureen
Director of Student Life

Jitendra Palaparty
Director of External Relations

Maggie Lawton
Director of Finance

Sarah Roberts
Director of Internal/University
Relations

The GSS respectfully acknowledges and thanks the many generations of stewards of the unceded land on which we are situated, the water that gives us life, and the air we breathe from the Songhees, X̱wsepsəm, and W̱SÁNEĆ nations. We commit ourselves to truth, reconciliation and decolonization.

GSS Website



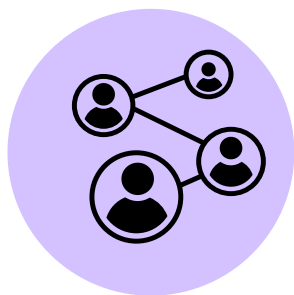
GSS Newsletter



George and Ida Halpern
Graduate Students' Centre

ANNUAL PLAN 2025/26

Connection and Recognition



Continue a strong feedback loop with our members

Celebrate success

Access and Support



Address affordability (where we can)

Improve low-barrier disability supports for students

Equip TAs with the tools they need to support accessible learning

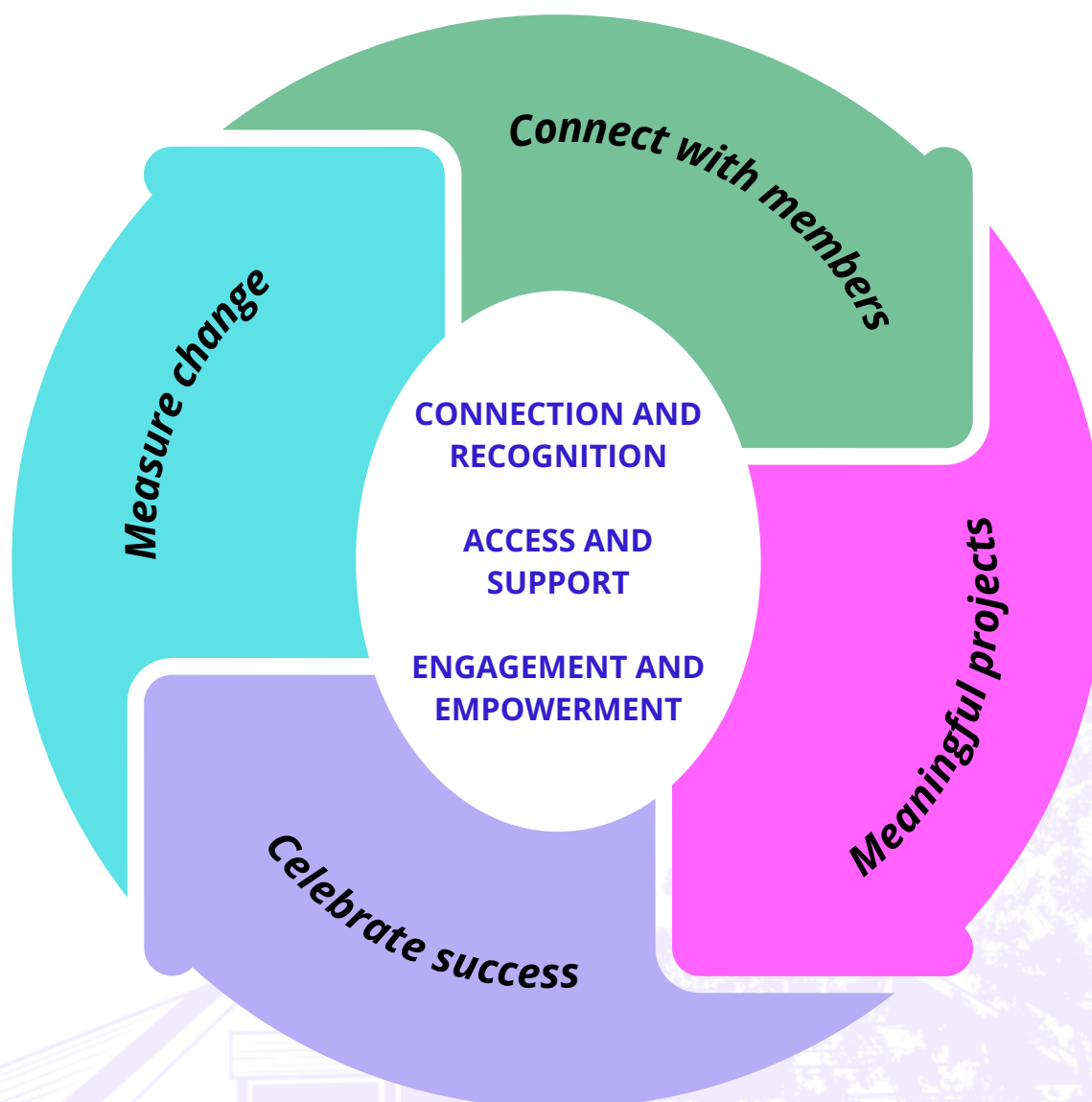
Engagement and Empowerment



Enrich members' experiences (skill building)

Increase engagement for *all* graduate students

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE FEEDBACK LOOP BETWEEN THE BOARD AND MEMBERS



Connect with members:
Encourage communication and engagement through board presence at events



Meaningful projects:
Support and empower members to turn their ideas into meaningful campaigns and initiatives.



Celebrate success:
Recognize achievements and communicate changes to our members.



Measure change:
Track our progress and continue to listen and adapt as new issues arise.

1 CONNECTION AND RECOGNITION

We value the strong communication between members and the Board built over time, and commit to remaining approachable, aware of ongoing issues, and appreciative of all that our membership is and does. We want to maintain the sense of belonging that members gain through interaction with each other and the wider community.

GOAL: CONTINUE A STRONG FEEDBACK LOOP WITH MEMBERS

TARGET: WHAT WOULD MEANINGFUL CHANGE LOOK LIKE?

- Improve communication channels between our membership and the board by providing frequent public updates on our progress.
- Provide more opportunities for members to find, contact, and engage directly with the board members that represent them.

George and Ida Halpern
Graduate Students' Centre

1 CONNECTION AND RECOGNITION

GOAL: CELEBRATE SUCCESS

TARGET: WHAT WOULD MEANINGFUL CHANGE LOOK LIKE?

- Improve how we communicate our advocacy campaigns and their successes to our membership, so they can benefit from the services they are entitled to.
- Highlight campaign wins through the GSS Newsletter and our website, working to connect graduate students with the support available to them and ensuring our members know when advocacy efforts create tangible improvements.
- Create opportunities for our members to share their academic and non-academic achievements through academic and social events, such as the Graduate Student Appreciation Week (GSAW), the Excellence in Graduate Research Symposium (EGRS), Makers' Markets, open mic nights, and more.
- Explore different avenues for spotlighting our members' achievements, including in the GSS Newsletter and on our social media.

George and Ida Halpern
Graduate Students' Centre

2 ACCESS AND SUPPORT

We recognize that our membership requires support in many areas as they navigate living, learning, working, and teaching. We are focusing on projects we believe are achievable with the connections and time we have, to improve how graduate students can best utilize the resources available to them.

GOAL: ADDRESS AFFORDABILITY (WHERE WE CAN)

PROJECT: WHAT SPECIFIC CAMPAIGNS OR INITIATIVES WILL WE UNDERTAKE?

- Develop and perform a referendum in Spring 2026 to adjust the GSS fees. We aim to better align our fees with the interests of our membership by lowering or eliminating fees for services not utilized by our members and increasing our support for those of frequent use.
- Stabilize the BCGS. The British Columbia Graduate Scholarship (BCGS) is currently a temporary measure available to provincial residents, and the amount is subject to change. Similar scholarships in other provinces are permanent programs at set amounts. We plan to advocate to the provincial government that the BCGS be made a permanent, stabilized award, in line with other provinces.
- Advocate that the university decreases or removes the fees paid by our members for the Graduate Student Tuition Income Offset Plan (GSTIOP), a program designed to aid financially struggling students. The administrative fees involved negate the benefit to our members.

2 ACCESS AND SUPPORT

GOAL: IMPROVE LOW-BARRIER DISABILITY SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

TARGET: WHAT WOULD MEANINGFUL CHANGE LOOK LIKE?

- Represent graduate student needs in accommodation planning, supervisory, and/or accessibility working groups with FGS. We will develop recommendations for revising supervisory policies and accommodation delivery processes through direct consultation with our graduate student members, including through GRC and committee work.
- Advance these recommendations by representing graduate students' needs in working groups and executive discussions to ensure they are reflected in future policy revisions.
- Advocate for appropriate training and tools for supervisors and graduate advisors to identify student needs and support the provision of academic accommodations.

GOAL: EQUIP TEACHING ASSISTANTS WITH RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ACCESSIBLE LEARNING

PROJECT: WHAT INITIATIVES OR CAMPAIGNS WILL WE UNDERTAKE?

- Work with CUPE, CAL and LTI to support Teaching and Lab Instructors in delivering classroom accommodations. Advocate for the University to provide clear policies and procedures for communicating accessibility needs and requests for accommodations to TAs, Lab Instructors and Assistants.
- Advocate for the provision of training, support and mentorship so that TAs/Lab Instructors can support accessibility requirements in the classroom/lab.

3 ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

The GSS' strength comes from our membership, and we want to ensure that all graduate students can take part in events and workshops that meaningfully enrich their time here. We are committed to exploring new kinds of opportunities that can cater to the many parts of the graduate student experience.

GOAL: ENRICH MEMBERS' EXPERIENCES

TARGET: WHAT WOULD MEANINGFUL CHANGE LOOK LIKE?

- **Professional skill-building:** We understand that many graduate students are seeking to develop skills in a variety of areas, we hope to provide opportunities that will supplement academic learning. For example, facilitating partnered workshops with the Libraries and Digital Scholarship Commons, the Graduate Studies Career Educator, and other collaborators on campus.
- **Advocacy skill-building:** Prepare our members to advocate for themselves and others, both within and beyond our Advocacy & Campaigns Committee. This includes developing skills like letter-writing, knowing how to identify interested communities, and contact decision-makers to make change happen.
- We plan to work together with UVic in the ideation and implementation of peer-to-peer support systems, a goal that emerged out of the 2024 FGS Equity Review.

3 ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

- **Fun & wellness skill-building:** Support the overall well-being of our members by continue to host a variety of engaging activities and events throughout the year, such as board games, knitting, painting, gardening, cookie decorating, ice skating, trivia, drag shows, karaoke, and movie nights, so graduate students can connect socially and have fun while developing skills and interests beyond their academic work.
- We also aim to expand wellness-focused events by collaborating with other campus partners like the Wellness Centre, Advocacy for Inclusive Recreation, Libraries, and EQHR.

GOAL: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS

TARGET: WHAT WOULD MEANINGFUL CHANGE LOOK LIKE?

- Increase engagement with all graduate students and strengthen a sense of belonging in the community, we will organize events that are accessible, inclusive, and welcoming to students from all backgrounds, programs, and schedules. We will host events that include and celebrate diverse graduate student communities, including students of colour, queer students, and international students, in collaboration with community partners such as the International Centre for Students, the Pride Collective, and the Multifaith Centre.

George and Ida Halpern
Graduate Students' Centre

IN CLOSING

We recognize that our goals are ambitious and look forward to your support in achieving them. This document reflects the issues and changes that graduate students have identified to us as directly impacting their quality of life, work, and education. We expect emergent and critical issues to arise throughout the year, and are prepared to adapt to the dynamic concerns of graduate students.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office Hours

Monday – Thursday: 10am – 4pm

Friday: 11am – 2pm

George and Ida Halpern
Graduate Students' Centre

GSS Website



GSS Newsletter

